

ECON 3400: American Economic History

Fall 2023 Syllabus

BASIC COURSE INFORMATION

Instructor: Chris Vickers / czvickers@auburn.edu / Office: 133 Miller Hall

Meeting time: TuTh 2:00PM-3:15PM

Location: Miller 207

Office hours: Tuesday 3:30PM-4:30PM, Wednesday 3:00PM-4:30PM, and by appointment

Textbook: *An Economic History of the United States* by Mark V. Siegler / recommended
See the “Bibliography” document on the course website for a more through discussion of texts.

Website: Canvas

DESCRIPTION

This course examines development of the American economy from colonial history to present. Topics include changes in institutions, the standard of living, income distributions, social mobility, labor markets, demographic structure, technological development, and the financial system.

More specifically, the class is roughly divided into three components: (1) Long run trends in the American economy, (2) the history of American labor, and (3) studies of particular sectors of the American economy (finance, transportation, etc.). Note there is no business cycle history here (in particular the Great Depression). This is covered in ECON 3420.

PREREQUISITES

ECON 2020, 2023, or 2027 (Principles of Microeconomics or Honors Principles of Microeconomics) and ECON 2030, 2033, or 2037 (Principles of Macroeconomics or Honors Principles of Macroeconomics), or instructor permission

EXPECTATIONS

- You are expected to do the assigned reading for each lecture
- Check your Auburn email and the course website regularly. I will post announcements, additional readings, assignments, etc., throughout the semester. I will assume you are aware of everything I send via email and post on the website.
- Please feel free to email me if you have any questions or concerns about the course. I will answer them promptly. Sometimes emails do get lost in my inbox so I encourage you to follow up if you do not hear from me within 48 hours.

EVALUATION & GRADES

Your course grade will be based on the following:

Paper analyses (15%): You must write three three-page (double spaced) analyses of papers to be discussed in class (5% each). This is partially to insure that at least some people have carefully read the papers beforehand for any given topic, and also to help you learn to evaluate published economic research (as opposed to textbook readings). We will discuss the format and set the schedule on the second day of class. No ChatGPT!!

Case study (20%): These will be a quantitative analysis and write-up based on topics we cover in class. No experience with statistics or statistical software is required. We will do the analysis in Excel.

Midterms (40%): There will be two closed-book and closed-notes midterm exams. No electronic devices will be allowed during the exam. Please come to the exam on time; you will not be given extra time if you are late for an exam.

Final Exam (25%): The final will have the same rules and format as the midterms: closed-book, closed-notes. It will be (weakly) cumulative.

Computing Final Grades: You will receive feedback from me after each midterm on where you stand in the class. Scoring on the “ten point scale” *guarantees* a given grade. That is, if you make $\geq 90\%$, you will receive an A, 80% guarantees a B, etc. I will curve grades upwards (but not downwards) if performance warrants it. Note that such a policy *necessarily* dictates somewhat “arbitrary” distinctions between an A and B, B and C, and so forth, and I will not respond to inquiries about how close people were to a boundary or requests for reconsideration.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Attendance at lectures is strongly encouraged but not mandatory. People who do not attend class regularly forfeit the right to use my office hours. You are responsible for any material covered and for any changes to the course that may be announced in class. Some class material will be posted on Canvas; some will be handed out in class. Should you miss a lecture for whatever reason, it is your responsibility to get the material from someone in the class. *You are required to put your mobile devices away when you attend lecture.*

REGRADE POLICY

If you believe that I had made a mistake in grading your midterm, I ask you to return your midterm and submit a written request describing the nature of the mistake within a week of the return of your midterm. I will regrade the *entire* exam once I have granted the request. Please note that because everyone in the class is subject to the same scoring rubric, I will not accept requests based entirely on your disagreement with it.

IMPORTANT DATES

Examinations

Note: Exams are to be taken during the regular course meeting time unless otherwise noted.

Midterm 1: Tuesday, September 19

Midterm 2: Tuesday, October 24

Final Exam: Friday, December 8, 1:30PM-3:30PM

Assignments

Case Study: Due at 11:59AM Friday, November 17 (that's by noon!!)

The schedule below is a rough guideline to what I am hoping to cover when. The number is the chapter in Siegler.

TUESDAY	THURSDAY
Aug 15th	17th Introduction §1
22nd Long Run Standard of Living §2	24th Institutions Part 1 §4
29th Institutions Part 2	31st Population Patterns §7
Sep 5th Health	7th Inequality: Measurement and Facts §13
12th Inequality: Determinants and Policies	14th Social Mobility: Measurement and Facts
19th Exam 1	21st Social Mobility: Determinants and Policies
26th Labor Markets §12	28th Education §11
Oct 3rd Immigration §15	5th Assimilation
10th Internal Migration	12th Slavery

TUESDAY	THURSDAY
17th Segregation and Discrimination §14	19th Pre-Civil War Finance §5
24th Exam 2	26th Post-Civil War Finance
31st Transportation Part 1 §8	Nov 2nd Transportation Part 2
7th Agriculture §9	9th Manufacturing Part 1 §10
14th Manufacturing Part 2	16th Government and Regulation §16, §17, §20
21st No Class: Thanksgiving	23rd No Class: Thanksgiving
28th Future Part 1 §21	30th Future Part 2

Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty, including but not limited to exchanging information about the exam during the exam, will not be tolerated. Consult the *Auburn University Academic Honesty Code* for more details. I will assume that you have been abiding by the code unless you show me evidence otherwise; at which point I will seek out the maximum allowable penalty for any academic dishonesty that occurs in this course. If you have questions about which behaviors are acceptable, please ask me. No ChatGPT!

Other Policies

Make-up exams: There will be *no make up exams*. If you are unable to take an exam, notify me and give me a written notice from your doctor or, if it is not health-related, a clear written statement of the reason which is subject to my approval. A list of university-approved reasons for missing an examination is available at:

<http://bulletin.auburn.edu/Policies/Academic/classattendance> If you miss an exam for a valid reason, those points will be reallocated to the other midterms and final (with appropriate re-weighting for the difficulty of the assignments if necessary.)

Other accommodations: If you require any additional accommodations, please come speak with me in person or email me. You are welcome to come to my office hours or set up an appointment. Please do so as soon as possible.

All-Access

What is All Access?

All Access is Auburn's program of delivering course materials to you digitally. Sometimes this will be a textbook, sometimes an access code. Your instructor has coordinated with the Bookstore to deliver this content for the course and help make sure you have what you need. All Access makes sure you are ready on the first day of class, and the material is so much cheaper with this delivery that it's the best way we can help you succeed in your courses at Auburn, financially and academically.

What content am I getting?

For this course, ECON 3400, you're getting access for the semester to Economic History of the United States by Siegler. It is the required content for the course.

How do I find it?

Look on the lefthand side of the course page in Canvas and under the modules tab, you'll find the content by clicking the VitalSource link. You'll have to create an account at VitalSource to get access. See the attached information for instructions about setting up and using VitalSource.

What does it cost?

For the first fifteen days of class, everyone gets this content for free. All students in this course start as opted in to pay for the content for the course. The price you'll be billed is \$55.29. If you want to opt out and not be charged, all you have to do is follow the attached instructions. You'll lose access at the end of the fifteen days unless you've purchased it on your own.

How do I pay?

If you're still opted in after September 6th, then we'll send the charge to your next ebill. This will be labeled as the course on your ebill so you'll know. You'll get emails before the fifteenth class day to remind you about the opt out deadline.

What if I'm on a scholarship?

We can charge All Access content to any scholarship that we charge at the Bookstore. Those will be done automatically when we bill. If you are a scholarship student and would prefer print, please come by the textbook customer service window and we can order print copies for you. These are done as requested and take three to five business days to arrive. Most scholarships will not pay for All Access and a print copy of the book.

What is the refund policy?

After the opt out deadline, we can only offer refunds to students who have dropped the course or withdrawn from the university. That's why the opt out deadline will be crucial for you to decide if you want to be charged or not.

What if I need help?

- VitalSource customer service is always an option at <https://support.vitalsource.com/hc/en-us>
- For most digital content in All Access, Google Chrome works best as a browser, and you'll want to make sure it's up to date.
- We are always happy to help as well, especially if you have a question about All Access or if something doesn't look right. books@auburn.edu or 844-1361
- You can also come see us at the Bookstore for in-person help.
- Also, <http://aub.ie/allaccess> has more info as well.